

# Overseas Press Club Bulletin

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## The National News Council: What Is It?

People familiar with the work of the National News Council tend to feel strongly about it — some applaud it, some detest it — but for every booster or critic there are at least ten people who never heard of the Council. Because the editors of the *The Bulletin* believe that the Council's role for good or ill is of importance to every journalist, we ask its associate director — **A.H. Raskin**, former assistant editorial page editor and labor columnist of the *The New York Times* — to answer some questions about what it is and what it does. Here are his replies:

*Q. What is the National News Council?*

A. It is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental agency established in 1973 with the dual mission of guarding against unfairness by the press and unfairness against the press. In line with this concept of service to the public interest in keeping the press both free and responsible, the Council provides a forum through which any individual or organization can seek impartial review of complaints of inaccuracy or unfairness in news reporting. The Council also works to uphold the principles of the First Amendment by endeavoring to protect the nation's news organizations, both print and broadcast, from unjust attack.

*Q. Who makes up the Council?*

A. It has eighteen members, drawn from all parts of the country and reflecting a broad variety of occupations, backgrounds and shades of opinion. Ten members come from the general public and eight from the media, including two former presidents of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and a former president of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Assisted by a small, highly skilled staff, these men and women examine complaints and prepare public statements in open meetings. Reports on their bimonthly meetings are regularly carried on the national wires of The Associated Press and United Press International. For the last four years *Columbia Journalism Review* published the text of the Council's findings and statements. In September of this year, by arrangement with the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi,

(Continued on page 2)

## Media Grabs Up Ex-*Washington Star* Newsmen

by Jessie Stearns  
Special To the OPC Bulletin

WASHINGTON: When a good newspaper as the 128-year-old *Washington Star* dies there are many mourners — and many jobless. Some retire, some start pounding

their typewriters to update their resumes, others sit by the telephone hoping they will be called for an interview and there are those who had their fill of journalism and turn to other careers.

For three quarters of the 286 employees in editorial the ordeal of being unemployed was short-lived. One of the reasons is that management acted quickly to help in the job hunt.

Soon after the announcement that the *Star* would no longer be published Time-Life Inc., owners of the paper, recruited the last *Star* editor, Murry J. Gart, three reporters, ombudsman George Beveridge, news editor Charles Martin and real-estate editor Dan Poole to stay on the payroll for a month to act as "an employment agency".

In the large empty building they contacted the reporters without work, helped them rewrite their resumes, telephone the top hundred editors in the U.S. and asked them what personnel they needed to fill vacancies or expand their staffs.

After these contacts, the *Hartford (Conn.) Courant* which was reorganizing hired six reporters and two advertising personnel immediately.

The *Washington Post*, the only daily newspaper now in the nation's capital, immediately interviewed top reporters.

The *Post* signed up syndicated columnists in addition to McGrory, James J. Kilpatrick, William F. Buckley, Jr., Carl Rowan, a large contingent of *Star* reporters — national and local — editors, critics (art, theater and book), and photographers . . . 32 in all.

*Washington Post* Executive Editor Ben Bradlee uttered nasty words when the *Star* purchased the syndicate handling comic strip "Doonesbury," so he reclaimed it immediately.

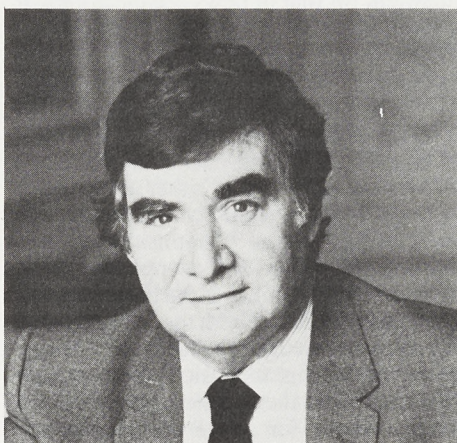
*Star* artist, cartoonist Pat Oliphant went with the Universal Press Syndicate, who handled his syndication at the *Star*.

The *Star* creation — "EAR" — Diana McLellan gossip column started Sept. 27, in the *Post*, appearing four times a week.

The *Baltimore Evening Sun* editor Reg Murphy added to the Washington Bureau political reporters — Jack Germond and

(Continued on page 2)

## Salinger at The OPC



Pierre Salinger, presently bureau chief of ABC in Paris, will report to OPC members and guests on **Wednesday, November 11th at 5:30 p.m.**, on the inside story of the negotiations that freed the American hostages in Iran. "America Held Hostage" is the new book that will be forthcoming, published by Doubleday, and it gives Mr. Salinger an opportunity to tell the full story of the drama which ranged from tragedy to farce.

### To Our Out-of-Town Members: Come Say "Hello"

We would like to meet with you if you plan to visit New York, whether you stay in the Club or not.

Will you, therefore, give us notice when you plan to arrive and how long you will be in New York; also where you can be reached so that we may arrange a pleasant get-together.

Please contact me or Mary Novick, manager of the office.

**Henry Gellermann**  
President, OPC



## NATIONAL NEWS COUNCIL

(Continued from page 1)

a switch was made under which the Council reports will appear in the society's monthly magazine, *Quill*, beginning with its December issue.

*Q. What powers does the Council have?*

A. The Council has no power to compel any news organization to put its findings or recommendations into effect, nor does it desire any. Indeed, it wants no punitive authority of any kind, except to the extent that the persuasiveness of the Council's decisions and the force of public opinion prompt the media to move toward increased attention to fairness and accuracy. As part of that accent on voluntarism, the Council refrains from prescribing standards or promulgating codes of conduct. Many newspapers and broadcasters make it a practice to cooperate fully with the Council in its investigation of complaints against them and also to inform their readers or listeners of any adverse findings that may result from these Council inquiries. When a resolution was submitted for consideration at this year's annual meeting of CBS shareholders requesting appointment of an ombudsman to review complaints against the network, the CBS board of directors successfully opposed the ideas as unnecessary because "a highly professional and independent watchdog for all U.S. journalism already exists" in the form of the National News Council.

*Q. Does the Council always find against the press?*

A. In only sixty of the 199 cases that have received formal consideration in the Council's eight years has it found the complaints against the media warranted in whole or in part. In 100 cases the complaints were found unwarranted and in the remaining 39 they were dismissed or resolved without formal action. This accounting does not include 654 additional complaints docketed by the Council which never got into the formal decision-making machinery because the Council staff found them too unsubstantial or otherwise deficient or because settlements were arrived at informally. In several important cases, the press has come before the Council as complainant rather than as the target of complaints. Notable among these was a case brought by *The Day* of New London, CT., against the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics in protest against the company's declaration of a news blackout shutting *The Day* out of participation in news conferences, the distribution of press releases or the answering of telephonic inquiries. Another similar case was brought by UPI against the Synanon Foundation, alleging efforts by Synanon to intimidate the press into silence by automatically threatening libel suits whenever critical news articles were published about its activities. In both cases the Council found in favor of the media.



A. H. Raskin

*Q. Doesn't the existence of a monitorial agency like the Council inhibit the freedom of the press by the very fact of subjecting the judgment of reporters and editors to second-guessing by outsiders?*

A. The Council has been careful from the outset not to seem to be substituting its judgment for that of news organizations. It has refrained from passing on any complaints arising out of expressions of opinion, except where the correctness of material put forward as fact is challenged, and in its decisions on news articles the Council has sought to limit its adverse findings to clear-cut breaches of either accuracy or fairness. While it would be fatuous to suggest that the Council's foot has never slipped, the steady rise in its support by leading news organizations is the best evidence that it has proceeded with the same spirit of responsibility it has endeavored to foster among the media. Its basic tenet remains a conviction that the maintenance of strong public support for a free press under the First Amendment is materially aided by public knowledge that there is a place to go when people feel they have been unfairly treated by a news organization.

## MEDIA GRABS (Cont'd from page 1)

Jules Witcover, Lyle Denniston to continue to cover the U.S. Supreme Court, and national reporter Walter Taylor.

Other Washington bureaus seizing the opportunity to employ the talent developed at the now defunct paper, was the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*. Joan Lowy went to the *Denver Rocky Mountain News*. And Zofia Smardz moved to *Newsweek's* Bonn Bureau.

Four signed up with Time-Life books. Seven staffers went with Time, Inc. the parent company. Harry Kelly, national editor, will write for the news service from New York City.

Ed Yoder, editorial page editor, is still undetermined about his future. But Sidney Estein, a top editor, is a consultant to Canadian papers, Betty Beale, who covered Washington for the *Star* for 35½ years will write once a week for the *Chicago Sun Times Syndicate*.

*New York Times* took Dennis Stern, John Montorio to New York. David Shribman and Phil Gailey joined the Washington Bureau.

Food editor and editorial writer Anne Crutcher moved to the White House helping with speeches, and writing a weekly food column for the *Post*.

Energy reporter Roberta Hornig (took time off to marry Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Morris Draper) is reporting at NBC, as is Lisa Myers.

Four other staffers switched from the print to television working on local coverage, Donald Saltz, former business reporter is reporting business in front of WJAL-TV camera, and Morris Siegel continues to broadcast on WKLA, sports.

O'Leary will cover the Latin America area for the Department of State working under Deputy Secretary of State William Clark.

## Jazz Concert A Smash

A standing-room-only crowd attended the twilight jazz session saluting the famed "trombone trail blazer," Vic Dickenson, subject of a recent *New Yorker* profile. It marked the thirteenth year of twilight jazz sessions at the OPC.

The event was hosted by Richard M. Sudhalter, jazz journalist for the *New York Post*, former foreign correspondent, author, and recognized as a foremost cornetist on the jazz scene. A highlight of the program which brought down the house was an original composition by famed trumpeteer Roy Eldridge in tribute to the trombonist and was written in collaboration with Jane Jarvis, jazz pianist and OPC member. Eldridge did the vocals in his fabled tradition, to: "Vic-Alladins Lamp." Ms. Jarvis stomped to a farethe-well.

The roster of brilliant musicians in performance included: Al Hall, bass; Irvin

Stokes on trumpet; Chuck Folds and Jim Andrews, piano; Jackie Williams, drums with the excitement of Bob Wilber, clarinet and soprano saxophone, heading performing musicians in honor which brought together Glen Zattola, trumpets Jackque Butler, trumpets; Warren Chiasson, vibraphones; singers Peter Dean and Claudio Maxwell. The greatest of jazz traditional music was foremost and closed out with a momentous rendition of "C Jam Blues."

A touching reunion took place among fellow musicians in honor: Doc Cheatham, Dicky Wells, Buck Clayton, Jabbo Smith, Earle Warren, Brooks Kerr, Frank Orchard and many others.

An OPC jazz citation was presented by chairman Wilma Dobie on behalf of committee members: Jerry Bissell, co-chairman; Gloria Watson, Jane Jarvis, Sol Zatt, George Burns, Al Wall, Doc Quigg, Ben Greenwald, E.P. Quinby.



# Member Profile - Who's Who At The OPC

by Charles Schreiber



**Walter Anderson, Editor**  
*Parade Magazine*

What do you say to more than 40 million readers each week?

As editor of *Parade*, the nation's largest circulation magazine, 37-year old **Walter Anderson** copes with this problem daily.

Saddled with a six-week lead time between deadline and publication, staff reporters and contributors must think beyond hard news. "We look to join the right writers with the right idea," Anderson tells a recent visitor. "As editor, my criteria is attitude... and that attitude involves trusting the intelligence of American readers."

Anderson speaks in a crisp, bright and enthusiastic manner — not unlike the content of *Parade's* editorial pages. Warning to his subject, he lays down a stack of back issues on the coffee table.

"When I asked Abbie Hoffman for a feature, I was not interested in his political philosophies. I was interested in his views as a fugitive." President Carter submitted to an exclusive interview by Dotson Rader on what it is like to be an ex-president. It was titled "After the Fall." And President Reagan wrote his own article simply headed, "What July Fourth Means to Me."

In the tradition of great magazines of the past, editor Anderson commissions stories by such great authors as Herman Wouk ("A Choice for Freedom") and Norman Mailer ("Until Dead," Mailer's reflections on the death penalty). "I want writers to write about things that make the blood rush — show emotions."

Looking more like a banker than editor in a blue pin-stripe suit with a white (not buttoned down) shirt and a jacquard tie, Anderson talks of other editorial changes he has instituted since he took the reins of *Parade* just over a year ago. "We have

added 'Significa,' a collection of odd striking but dignified facts by Irving Wallace, David Wallechinsky, and Amy Wallace; cartoonist Bill Hoest's "Laugh Parade" featuring Howard Huges, a large dog; and Julia Child is developing a monthly, four page cooking section."

Anderson elaborated saying, "You must understand that we are under no pressure to publish any story. As editor, I feel I am caretaker of a very special trust. We must serve the reader... be a place of understanding. At *Parade*, we can't be part of the 'gee whiz' school of journalism. We must be part of the 'that's the way it must be school.' We take great care in tailoring the idea and the writer to the subject." Anderson admits that his plan does not always work. "Occasionally we miss. I've had to reject stories from some important writers," whom he refuses to identify.

We start to talk about the magazine's editorial mix, when senior editor **Herb Kupferberg** pokes his head into the office for a last minute check-out.

Anderson explains that Kupferberg was senior editor when Jes Gorkin, who edited *Parade* for three decades, hired him with the same title in 1977. Two years after Gorkin retired (and is now editor of *50 plus*), Anderson was given the editor's mantle. "Herb," Anderson says, "has been a friend, confidant and advisor," reflecting a warmth obviously shared by the two men. The two talents now have a third — Buddy Weiss, long-time editor of the *Paris Herald Tribune*.

A typewriter in his office "...is for memos," Anderson insists. "I am not a writer. I am an editor."

It wasn't always that way. A native of Westchester County, New York, he attended Westchester Community College and received a B.S. (summa cum laude) from Mercy College (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.). After service in Vietnam as a marine sergeant he started his journalism career as a general assignment reporter with the *White Plains Reporter Dispatch* in 1967. Six years later he was named editor and general manager. An executive recruiter picked him for the *Parade* job, a search initiated by the man he would eventually succeed, Jess Gorkin.

**NOTICE:**  
**Semi-Annual Meeting Oct. 29, 1981,**  
**7 PM in President's Room.**

**Irving S. Taubkin, editor of the OPC Bulletin is on vacation.**  
**Guest editor: Larry Stessin.**

## ACTIVE RESIDENT

**Thomas L. Friedman;** Financial Reporter, NY Times  
Sponsors: *Henry Gellermann, Dwight E. Sargent*  
**Helen Del Monte;** Fiction/Book Editor, McCall's Magazine  
Sponsors: *Marcia Drennen, Henry Gellermann*

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## OPC BULLETIN

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*Irvin S. Taubkin, Editor; Helen Alpert, George E. Burns, Rosalind Massow, Rosalind Moore, Charles J. Schreiber, associate editors.*



## Who, What, Where

By Rosalind Massow

**NEW CHALLENGE** . . . With an eye towards expanding and modernizing its operation, Duke University Press has chosen OPC'er **Richard C. Rowson** to head up its company. Formerly president of Pergamon Press and his own publishing consulting business in New York, Rowson has big plans for Duke. More books and journals will be published, the company will establish international links with other publishing and marketing facilities and Rowson will modernize Duke's operation with installation of word processors and computers.

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**SUPREME EFFORT** . . . Ex-pres. **Barrett McGurn**, for the past eight years director of public information for the Supreme Court of the United States., has written about the august body in a new Public Affairs Handbook just published by Longman. Barrett's contribution to "Informing the people" is a chapter entitled, "The Supreme Court: Information with Justice."

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**DINING OUT-FAR OUT** . . . **Hugh Conway**, who writes a dining out column for TV News, will be evaluating Middle East cuisine late October when he and his wife Edith tour Egypt, Jordan and Israel. . . OPC President **Henry Gellermann** off to Zurich lunch. Well, not exactly. He's giving a luncheon at the International Press Institute in Zurich while attending meetings in that city. Gellermann will also touch base in Brussels and London.

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**TO HOST TRAVEL GROUP** . . . Man-about-Athens **Connie Soloyanis** will have his hands full in '82. He's been appointed Host Chairman for the annual convention of the Society of American Travel Writers when the group meets next November in Greece. That means shepherding 400 travel-wise types in Rhodes, Athens and on an Aegean cruise.

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**ARTICLES** . . . A recent issue of Variety carried Robert Reinhart's story on **Anita Loos**' "for fun" memorial service. Reinhart, formerly a Variety staffer, now retired, had compiled a filmography for Anita Loos' book "Kiss Hollywood Goodbye" . . . **Aaron Einfrank**, who covers the Middle East from his Munich base, has articles on Iraq, Iran and the Third World in the latest edition of the Encyclopedia America Year Book. . . **Bunny Brower** is budget-minded these days. She's written a piece on affordable big city vacations for *Better Homes and Gardens* and is in Germany researching another low-cost possibility in the Danube Valley and Bavarian forest regions.

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## Special to OPC:

### Hong Kong - No Bed of Roses for Newsmen

The media in Hong Kong inevitably reflect much of the extraordinary nature of Hong Kong itself. A barren rock it has become the third busiest port in the world, a center for trade, finance and communication.

The population of around 5 million has four television channels, 80 cinemas and a workforce with increasing leisure to spend on these.

There are 45 daily newspapers, the majority in Chinese, four in English, one in Japanese. The press is not subject to any form of government censorship and is free to publish anything, subject only to the laws of libel. There are numerous other newspapers for special interests, music, entertainment, sports, racing, even sex.

Official figures show that Hong Kong has the second highest newspaper readership in Asia, after Japan, with some 350 copies for every 1,000 people. The literacy rate is high, except among the old who received no education in China, and the press acts as a public forum for Hong Kong people, who do not have an electoral system of government.

However, all is not rosy in this literary garden. Local critics say the general standard of the press leaves something to be desired. Hong Kong does not have a newspaper with international standing. Journalists are under-trained, under-paid and lack status. It is not the glamorous profession that it is in other countries. Good journalists in Hong Kong tend to leave the profession to go into industry, public relations or government information services. This continual bleeding of talent leaves the profession weak.

However, the Hong Kong Journalists Association is pushing with various educa-

tional institutes to devise an adequate training course for journalists, to include both academic and practical training. The Association is also pushing for better wages and working conditions.

There is also a wide range of periodicals published in Hong Kong, and the numbers are increasing. Standards of printing are first class and the advertising industry is flourishing. Current figures show 332 publications, 212 in Chinese, 83 in English, 35 bilingual and two trilingual. They cover a wide range of subjects from highly technical matters to local entertainment guides.

Up to now overseas pressmen have tended to be based in Hong Kong by their agencies or newspapers. International agencies include AFP, Reuters, CBS, NBC, the BBC, UPI and others. With the opening of China, some of these are being relocated in Beijing, Hong Kong being maintained as a local office. Hong Kong's prime communication system has always been a major factor in its selection as a regional base for newsmen.

There are two television companies in Hong Kong — Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) and Rediffusion Television Limited (RTV) — broadcasting a daily average of 60 hours in Chinese and English on four channels.

They both transmit entirely in color, except for old black and white films, and are commercial. They buy a great deal of overseas material, from America, Britain and Australia mainly. They maintain large newsrooms and broadcast local news several times a day. Foreign programmes in English are either dubbed or sub-titled for the Chinese channel, and subtitled in Chinese for the English channel.

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